
From: Sukys, Ray (TRO-09)
To: Ossi, Joseph (TPE); Libberton, Sean (TPE)
Sent: 4/2/2004 9:07:20 AM
Subject: FW: An Editorial from The Honolulu Advertiser

-----Original Message-----

From: Laureen Brennan [mailto:lbrennanompo@hawaii.rr.com]
Sent: Friday, April 02, 2004 10:51 AM
To: Sukys, Ray (TRO-09)
Subject: An article from The Honolulu Advertiser

Article: Transit planning must shift to high gear

This article from HonoluluAdvertiser.com has been sent to you by Laureen Brennan

Laureen Brennan's e-mail: lbrennanompo@hawaii.rr.com

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Posted on: Wednesday, March 31, 2004

EDITORIAL

Transit planning must shift to high gear

It has long been clear that the overlapping or duplication of transportation services between the state and the county on O'ahu has led to a certain level of disfunction.

It's true that officials at both levels have tried to improve the situation by increasing their communication and coordinating projects. Then there is the federally mandated O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization, which is supposed to act as a central clearing house for all projects.

But surely, we could do better.

That was the message from Leslie Rogers, head of the western region of the Federal Transit Administration, which includes Hawai'i. Rogers visited Honolulu on the heels of a new federal report that criticized local officials for developing transportation projects without sufficient funding.

The message here is simple: The pot of federal money available to support transportation and traffic is dwindling and it will go to jurisdictions that have the best plan (including crucial plans for local funding) on the books.

The best plan will also have all levels of government in sync and pursuing the same goals.

If anything, O'ahu appears to be going in the opposite direction. The city's ambitious Bus/Rapid Transit program has been scaled back dramatically, at least in the first increment. The state administration has been steadfastly skeptical about proposals to put dedicated bus transit lanes on state highways leading into and out of urban Honolulu.

Meanwhile, some legislators are looking once again at futuristic and very expensive rail systems to bring commuters into town.

And there is nothing close to agreement on a local funding plan for any ambitious transit project. Honolulu came close several years ago when the state Legislature authorized a county "sales" tax to finance transit. The City Council defeated that proposal by a narrow one-vote margin.

Most observers say there is little sign of the political will to go that route again.

That leaves Honolulu, and Hawai'i, at a crossroads. If officials are determined to do

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something about traffic congestion other than making Band-Aid fixes, they will have to sit down and come up with a unified, comprehensive plan that includes both short-term and long-term projects.

And they will have to talk turkey about how they will raise the local share of what these projects will cost.

Article url: <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2004/Mar/31/op/op01a.html>

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